

SLAVERY IN GEORGIA, 1850-1860, AS REFLECTED IN SELECTED  
NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER RELATED SOURCES

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JANICE DIANE SIMMONS

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## ABSTRACT

## HISTORY

SIMMONS, JANICE DIANE

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Slavery in Georgia, 1850-1860, As Reflected in Selected  
Newspapers and Other Related Sources

Advisor: Professor Edward Sweat

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The primary purpose of this study is to ascertain whether an examination of newspapers account, advertisements, notices, and general items regarding slavery could shed new light on the institution in the state of Georgia. Special attention has been given to runaway notices, advertisements of slaves for hire and for sale, as well as those items dealing with more general aspects of Georgia's institution. An attempt has been made to acquaint the reader with the various laws which governed the institution of slavery in Georgia.

Throughout the years 1850-1860 slavery played an important role in the life of antebellum Georgia. The state was constantly confronted with the problems of fugitive slaves. Georgia's economy was centered around the use of slave labor. The ownership of slaves afforded an individual with economic and social advantages.

The main sources of information were selected newspapers which included the Albany Patriot, Columbus Enquirer, Milledgeville Federal Union, Rome Courier, and the Savannah Daily Georgian. Federal census

reports, Georgia laws and city ordinances were utilized. Additional information was obtained from the works of such historians as Kenneth Stamp, Ralph Flanders, Frederic Bancroft, Richard Wade, and U. B. Phillips.

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## INTRODUCTION

The institution of slavery was the keystone to Southern civilization. Slavery was an integral part of the life of antebellum Georgia. Slave labor was thought by Georgians to be essential to the economic well-being of the state, while ownership of slaves was one barometer of social standing and helped to determine social status. The economics of slavery as well as other aspects of the institution have been the object of considerable attention by many historians. A great deal of time has been devoted to this subject by such noted historians as U. B. Phillips in his work American Negro Slavery, Ralph Flanders author of Plantation Slavery in Georgia, Kenneth Stampp in The Peculiar Institution, Frederic Bancroft in his work Slave Trading in The Old South, and Richard Wade author of Slavery In The Cities. However, each tends to present a different view concerning the economic and social aspects of slavery. For example, U. B. Phillips asserts that slaves presented a financial burden for the master, while others such as Stampp and Bancroft maintain that the selling and hiring out of slaves tended to be a profitable enterprise.

This study was undertaken to ascertain whether an examination of newspaper accounts, advertisements, notices, and general items regarding slavery could shed new light on the institution in the state of Georgia. Special attention was given to notices of slaves who had run away from their masters, while a good deal of attention was focused on advertisements of slaves for hire and for sale, as well as those dealing with more

general aspects of the institutions. This study also makes mention of free blacks, since the laws and practices which governed slavery also affected free persons of color.

It was not necessary to examine every newspaper published in Georgia in order to obtain a reasonably accurate estimate of the impact of slavery on the life of Georgians. The five newspapers utilized in this analysis were the Albany Patriot, 1850-1960; Columbus Enquirer, 1850-1855; 1857-1858, Milledgeville Federal Union, 1850-1860; Rome Courier, 1850-1853; and the Savannah Daily Georgian, 1850-1855. The five sample newspapers selected were regarded as illustrative for the following reasons: they are representative of the broad physiographic regions which the state embraces. Savannah covers the coastal region, Columbus and Milledgeville represent the black belt region, Albany covers the southern part of the state and Rome covers the upper piedmont area. At least two of the state's largest towns and cities are represented; the state capital is the locale of one of the newspapers; at least one third of the total slave population of the 1850's and 1860's were to be found in the cities and counties represented in this sample.

Judging from the decrease in the number of notices concerning fugitive slaves, and comparable decrease in the number of for hire advertisements, fewer slaves ran away and fewer slaves were hired out after 1855 in Georgia. The bulk of such material was found to appear in the newspapers examined for the years between 1850 and 1855. What this represents is unclear. Whether or not the repercussions from the adoption of the Compromise of 1850, and the strained political climate in Georgia in the early years of the decade, were contributing factors cannot be deter-

mined from the notices. Slave revolts in the South and rumors of rebellion probably resulted in the tightening of controls in the latter half of the decade. This would result in fewer opportunities to escape, and in a lessening of the desire or willingness of owners to hire out their slaves. As the decade drew to an end, popular opinion undoubtedly frowned on such practices.

When such sources of information as federal census reports, Georgia legislative enactments, and city ordinances are supplemented by newspaper accounts, advertisements, and notices, the base on which to make generalizations about certain aspects of slavery in Georgia is broadened. As indicated earlier the works by such noted historians as Kenneth Stampp, Ralph Flanders, Richard Wade, Frederic Bancroft, and U. B. Phillips proved to be extremely helpful in the preparation of this study. The newspapers used in this analysis are found on microfilm at the State of Georgia Department of Archives and History. At times the conditions of the newspapers and census reports made an accurate transcribing of the material rather difficult.

The importance of this study lies in the fact that it is the first study that has been done on slavery in Georgia, based primarily upon newspapers accounts, advertisements and notices.

## CHAPTER I

### RUNAWAY SLAVES

Between 1790 and 1850 the popularity of slave labor increased in Georgia due to the high prices of cotton, some industrial development, and the cultivation of rice. Federal laws prohibiting the African slave trade made slaveholders reluctant to manumit their slaves. As a result it became difficult for slaves to obtain their freedom. Due to the scarcity of slave labor, the working conditions of slaves deteriorated. Confronted with these unfavorable conditions slaves sought various means of resisting this "peculiar institution," with absconding becoming one of the major methods of resistance. Kenneth Stampp maintains that

the number of runaway slaves was not large enough to threaten the peculiar institution because of the measures slaveholders took to prevent the problem from growing to such proportions, but their means were never entirely successful, as advertisements for fugitives in southern newspapers made abundantly clear.<sup>1</sup>

The runaway slave notices examined in this analysis may be classified into two categories, "brought to jail" notices and those notices published by owners of "said fugitives." The runaway notices examined in

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<sup>1</sup>Kenneth Stampp, The Peculiar Institution (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), pp. 109-10.



this study involve a total of 440 fugitive slaves. One hundred and eighty-two fugitive slaves may be classified in the category of the "brought to jail" notices.<sup>1</sup> These notices were submitted by the jailors of such counties as Bibb, Chatham, Muscogee, Pulaski, Lee, Floyd, and Telfair. "Brought to jail" notices usually included a concise description of "said fugitive." It requested the owner to come forward and claim his property as well as pay the jailor for the upkeep of the individual. For example, W. H. Hugues, the jailor of Bibb County, requested William Howes, of Harris County, Georgia to come forward and prove ownership of his slave, Sam. In addition, Sam was described as being fifty years old, five feet, six inches, and of light complexion.<sup>2</sup> A notice submitted by a Muscogee County jailor described Ned, a runaway slave, as being of dark complexion, seventeen to eighteen years old, and the property of L. M. Wiley of Barber County, Alabama.<sup>3</sup>

Some "brought to jail" notices provided the reader with detailed information. The following is illustrative of such a notice:

Jared, twenty-five or thirty years old, six feet, one hundred and fifty pounds, belongs to Thomas Williams of Washington, D. C. . . . Said slave ran away from his owner while stopping in Columbus, Georgia. . . . He was badly wounded by a shot in being arrested. Said slave stayed in jail two or three weeks and again escaped. He was then captured in Houston County.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Albany Patriot, 1850-1860, Columbus Enquirer, 1850-1860, Milledgeville Federal Union, 1850-1860, Rome Courier, 1850-1853, Savannah Daily Georgian, 1850-1855. Hereafter cited as AP, CE, MFU, RC, SDG. (These figures were obtained by counting all the runaway notices which were utilized in this study.)

<sup>2</sup>MFU, 1 January 1850.

<sup>3</sup>CE, 18 March 1851. (The name of this newspaper varies from Columbus Enquirer to Columbus Daily Enquirer.)

<sup>4</sup>MFU, 22 July 1851.

Jack, a fugitive slave, was taken to jail while attempting to escape to Mississippi. He was listed as twenty-nine or thirty years old, five feet, eleven inches and the property of Stephen Tool of Harnville, South Carolina.<sup>1</sup>

The failure to have the proper identification at times resulted in free blacks being apprehended and taken to jail as fugitive slaves. A free black named Datson was taken to jail for failure to have free papers in his possession.<sup>2</sup> A runaway notice listed Hardy Bell, a free black, even though "said slave states he is free and formerly lived in Bertie County, North Carolina. Johnathan Taylor is his guardian."<sup>3</sup>

Advertisements published by slaveholders comprise the second category of notices used in this analysis. Two hundred and fifty-eight slaves may be classified into this group.<sup>4</sup> Because these were submitted by owners anxious to regain property of some value, this latter group of notices usually offered a reward for the return of escaped slaves. These rewards varied from ten dollars to two hundred dollars, a range suggestive of the value placed by the master on his individual slaves. Robert Williams, a farmer from Chatham County and owner of eleven slaves<sup>5</sup> offered a reward

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<sup>1</sup>CE, 6 January 1852.

<sup>2</sup>SDG, 15 April 1852. (The name of this newspaper changes from Savannah Daily Georgian to Savannah Georgian after 1854).

<sup>3</sup>AP, CE, MFU, RC, SDG. (This number was obtained by counting all of the runaway notices utilized in this study).

<sup>4</sup>SDG, 22 April 1850.

<sup>5</sup>U.S. Census, MS, Schedule II, "Enumeration of Slave Population" of Chatham County, 1850.

of ten dollars for the return of his sixteen years old female slave, Milly,<sup>1</sup> while Freeman McClendon offered a reward of one hundred dollars for the return of his slave Joe.<sup>2</sup> The following differs from the above, in that the runaway was also a fugitive from justice. Although not identified in the advertisement, one Samuel M. Burnett offered a reward of one hundred and fifty dollars for the return of William J. Burney to the Sheriff's office in Glynn County for the murder of Albert Burnett of Glynn County.<sup>3</sup> The most reasonable conclusion is that the Burnetts were related. In addition, some notices included the offer of a bounty for proof to convict a white or black person for harboring fugitive slaves. For example, B. M. Cox of Newton, Georgia offered a reward of one hundred dollars for the return of his slave and for evidence to convict a white person for aiding "said Slave."<sup>4</sup>

In many instances notices submitted by slaveholders gave a complete description of alleged runaway slaves and sometimes told where the fugitives were thought to have absconded. One such notice submitted by J. W. Snead of Milledgeville described his female slave, Jonna as twenty-three years old, of light yellow color, five feet, four inches, slim, intelligent, possessing a low forehead, thin face and bushy hair. Additional information stated that "she left carrying a black trunk and can tell a very plausible story." Twenty dollars was offered for her return.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>SDG, 22 April 1850.

<sup>2</sup>RC, 20 March 1851.

<sup>3</sup>SDG, 25 July 1852.

<sup>4</sup>AP, 30 March 1855.

<sup>5</sup>MFU, 10 June 1856.

Another slave, John was described as thirty years old, five feet, nine inches tall, and one hundred and seventy pounds. His owner stated that "said slave had been in the vicinity of Americus, Georgia for several days during the month of October."<sup>1</sup>

Several runaway notices were submitted to the different newspapers by the employers of hired slaves. For example, Bob, a bondsman "with the African or low country Brouge," ran away from a railroad, where he was hired out to Randolph Spaulding.<sup>2</sup> James Bilbo advertised for the return of a mulatto slave, Christopher, whom he had employed to work on board a ship.<sup>3</sup>

As indicated earlier, an examination of numerous runaway slave notices showed that description played a major role in advertising for the return of a fugitive slave. Such descriptions would include, age, color, weight, and height. Along with this was given the owner's name, and at times any other identifying feature. The slave Warner, for example, was described as a person of "yellow complexion, 40 years old, five feet, ten inches in height, bearing a 'scar on the back of his right hand from a burn'." Interestingly enough, according to the notice, he appeared "to be very intelligent."<sup>4</sup> Another notice referred to a forty-five year old male slave, Daniel, who was five feet, ten inches in height, with very dark complexion, almost baldheaded, with some rather

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<sup>1</sup>AP, 20 January 1859.

<sup>2</sup>MFU, 17 February 1852.

<sup>3</sup>SDG, 1 April 1853.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 3 January 1850.

grey hair. He had very large shoulders, a scar on his left foot near the instep, was slow-spoken, and was a blacksmith by trade.<sup>1</sup> One Morris was listed as being twenty-six years old, a mulatto, 150 or 160 pounds, with straight hair, and with a front tooth missing; he was a good cook and house servant, and was the property of H. L. Whitehurst.<sup>2</sup> An advertisement for May 27, 1853 referred to a male slave, Sam, the property of C. C. King of Bainbridge, as twenty-five years old, five feet, ten inches, "dark complected," with his lower lip badly disfigured, part of which he lost in a fight.<sup>3</sup>

It is worth noting that color was an important factor in describing a runaway slave. The descriptions of color varied from mulatto, red mulatto, copper, coffee, dark brown, dark to very dark. A Negro woman, Vinn was referred to as "not strictly black but of brown color."<sup>4</sup> Whereas Robert Bledsoe stated that his female slave was of a "ginger cake" color.<sup>5</sup> Another slave was described as being between a copper and black color.<sup>6</sup> One Jane was listed as "bright black."<sup>7</sup> One hundred of the total number

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 28 July 1850.

<sup>2</sup> CE, 14 January 1858.

<sup>3</sup> AP, 27 May 1853.

<sup>4</sup> MFU, 19 September 1850.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 13 May 1851.

<sup>6</sup> AP, 23 May 1851.

<sup>7</sup> SDG, 3 January 1852.

of slaves found in runaway notices were listed as mulattoes.<sup>1</sup> One notice identified a male fugitive, Crawford, as nearly white.<sup>2</sup>

The typical runaway slave advertisement that appeared in various newspapers described a male, twenty-five to thirty years old, between 136 and 150 pounds. Not only did males run away, but notices reveal the fact that females used this response as a means of expressing their dissatisfaction with bondage. Thirty-seven of the runaway slaves found in this study were females.<sup>3</sup> Illustrative of this was a notice published by Ezekiel Clifton of Savannah offering a reward of fifty dollars for the return of his "negro woman," Catty.<sup>4</sup>

It is almost impossible to examine fugitive slave notices without focusing attention on the reasons for escapes. The notices suggest that slaves ran away for various reasons. The desire to avoid punishment was often a reason for attempted escapes.<sup>5</sup> For example, one William H. Richardson admitted that his fugitive slave, George bore some marks of the whip on his back.<sup>6</sup> Tombo, was listed as having "marks from a whip which shows that he has been badly flogged."<sup>7</sup> In the same respect, an adver-

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<sup>1</sup>AP, MFU, CE, SDG, RC. (This figure was obtained by counting the total number of notices used in this study.)

<sup>2</sup>CE, October 1857.

<sup>3</sup>AP, CE, MFU, RC, SDG. (This number was obtained by counting the total number of notices used in this study.)

<sup>4</sup>SDG, 3 January 1850.

<sup>5</sup>Ralph Flanders, Plantation Slavery in Georgia (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1933), p. 150.

<sup>6</sup>AP, 20 January 1857.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 3 April 1850.

tisement submitted by Robert Bledsoe, declared that his female slave, Mary, had been recently whipped before absconding.<sup>1</sup> The fact that some owners went to great ends to explain how a slave received a certain scar implies that severe punishment was frequently a cause for absconding. An advertisement submitted on February 7, 1852 listed Sam as having a scar supposedly inflicted with a knife.<sup>2</sup> Aaron was described as having a scar on the side of his face caused by a burn.<sup>3</sup>

Not too suprisingly, in advertising for the return of a runaway slave, owners frequently insisted that he absconded for no cause. One such notice submitted by James Renfroe pertaining to his slave, Jep, claimed that "there was no cause whatsoever for him to run away at the time he left."<sup>4</sup>

According to Stamp, "flight was also a means by which slaves resisted attempts to work them too severely."<sup>5</sup> Several notices are supportive of this statement. For instance, Ellick absconded after being hired out as a painter.<sup>6</sup> Another slave, Christopher, was hired out to work about town or on board a ship when he disappeared.<sup>7</sup> Charles absconded from the Central Railroad, where he was employed.<sup>8</sup> In the same

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<sup>1</sup>MFU, 13 May 1851.

<sup>2</sup>SDG, 3 January 1852.

<sup>3</sup>CE, 15 July 1852.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 10 August 1853.

<sup>5</sup>Stamp, The Peculiar Institution, p. 113.

<sup>6</sup>AP, 4 February 1858.

<sup>7</sup>SDG, 1 April 1853.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 30 July 1850.

respect, a male slave, Jessey belonging to Stephen Kimber near Harmony, Georgia, escaped from Captain Cutts of Americus, who employed him to work on the railroad.<sup>1</sup>

A strong desire to be reunited with family and friends often resulted in an unhappy slave attempting to return to his former master. Indicative of this is an advertisement submitted by William B. Robinson in reference to his newly acquired slave:

Hartwell is twenty-eight years old. . . .He is somewhere in the vicinity of Columbus, as he has a wife at Col. Seaborn, and does not want to leave her to go with me to Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He has lived in Columbus for the last fifteen years.<sup>2</sup>

A female slave, Agnes, was believed to have absconded to Texas, where her husband resided.<sup>3</sup> Fredrick was believed to have been on his way to Beaufort, where he was raised or to Savannah, where he had friends.<sup>4</sup> An advertisement for October 26, 1862 stated:

Joe, called Joe J. or Lumsden's Joe. . .worked several years in the gold mines of Habersham, has been seen there since absconding. He has a wife there belonging to Harvey Broon. . .may be in Floyd County, where the late John S. Lumsden owned a plantation or in Bilbo, where he has relatives belonging to Thomas Hardeman, Jr.<sup>5</sup>

Notices reveal that some slaves ran away after the death of their masters for fear of being sold. One such notice listed Tom, a slave as the property of Jonathan Grey, deceased of Camden County, Georgia.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> AP, 23 December 1858.

<sup>2</sup> CE, 15 March 1853.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 26 December 1854.

<sup>4</sup> SDG, 10 October 1859.

<sup>5</sup> MFU, 26 October 1859.

<sup>6</sup> SDG, 4 January 1854.



Another notice stated that Levi, a dark mulatto, was raised by Michael M. Dent, "lately deceased" of Harris County.<sup>1</sup>

Central to any understanding of fugitive slave notices is analysis of the methods used by slaves to escape bondage. Attempting to pass for white was a popular means among mulattoes. Thirty-five of the total number of runaways found in this study were mulattoes, who were attempting to pass for white.<sup>2</sup> In advertising for the return of a male mulatto, Jo Beck, the owner warned that "said slave will insist he is white."<sup>3</sup> A notice pertaining to Christopher Columbus Deloach, who was described as having white skin and grey eyes, emphasized that he would "attempt to pass" as a white boy traveling to a free state.<sup>4</sup> Another notice made reference to a mulatto male, John, who could speak French. The owner mentioned that John had previously claimed to be a Frenchman and had threatened to prosecute the party who attempted to take him to jail.<sup>5</sup> R. B. Smiley of Crawford County, Georgia claimed that his female slave, who absconded with a "negro boy" could be taken for a white woman, "as there is not more than one-eighth negro blood in her." Additional information stated that "she decoyed the yellow boy off with her, and passed on the road as a white woman and the

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<sup>1</sup>CE, 30 May 1854.

<sup>2</sup>AP, CE, MFU, RC, SDG. (This figure was obtained by counting all of the advertisements utilized in this study.)

<sup>3</sup>CE, 7 October 1851.

<sup>4</sup>AP, 17 November 1854.

<sup>5</sup>MFU, 24 May 1853.

boy was hers."<sup>1</sup> Another slaveholder, R. G. Mays, stated that his slave, John Butler, was "fond of changing his name and passing for a white man."<sup>2</sup> Because it was rather difficult to distinguish very light mulattoes from white, slaveholders usually described the articles of clothing worn by fugitive slaves. For example, a mulatto slave, Will, was listed as wearing a black dress coat, black striped cashmere pants, and a black silk hat. The owner emphasized that Will dressed like a gentleman and might attempt to pass for white.<sup>3</sup> A mulatto female, Mary, who absconded with her mother, was listed as wearing a striped calico dress and a calico bonnett. It was believed that Mary would attempt to pass for white and claim her mother as her servant.<sup>4</sup>

The next means or method is interesting for it is illustrative of the fact that at least some of the slaves of Georgia had been given the rudiments of an education. Several slaves possessed the ability to read and write which enabled them to forge free papers or passes. J. Hobba revealed that his slave, Burill, could "read and write very well and probably wrote a pass."<sup>5</sup> Driver Glasgow absconded from his master by forging free papers or a pass.<sup>6</sup> Another slave, John, who could read and write was believed to have forged a pass.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>SDG, 20 July 1853.

<sup>2</sup>AP, 2 April 1859.

<sup>3</sup>MFU, 10 June 1856.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 22 July 1856.

<sup>5</sup>CE, 20 June 1854.

<sup>6</sup>SDG, 29 July 1850.

<sup>7</sup>AP, 9 September 1858.

Other slaves escaped bondage with the aid of free blacks and whites.<sup>1</sup> A female slave, Frances, was believed to be "concealed in some house or celler about town" or under a negro's bed."<sup>2</sup> In advertising for the return of his slave, Ned, the owner stated: "I learned he says he can and will get a man to take him off."<sup>3</sup> Another slave, Louis, was seen in the company of whites and blacks after he absconded from his master.<sup>4</sup> Cooper, a fugitive slave, was persuaded to leave his master and accompany a man by the name of Thomas White, who promised to sell him and divide the money. Cooper was sold near Tallahassee, Florida, but escaped again and turned himself into the Bryan County courthouse because he did not receive his share of the money.<sup>5</sup> An advertisement published January 29, 1857 warned that a male slave, Seaborn was probably harbored by whites around Americus, Georgia or had been "carried off by agreement with boy and sold for mutual benefits of thief and boy with the understanding that he will again escape and repeat operation."<sup>6</sup> The two above mentioned notices are not only significant because of the fact that whites helped slaves to escape, but they also emphasize the fact that whites collaborated with blacks to cheat a third party.

Georgia laws were very stringent on persons found guilty of harboring slaves. For instance, a white man was sentenced to ten years hard labor

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<sup>1</sup> Stamp, The Peculiar Institution, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> CE, 7 August 1855.

<sup>3</sup> MFU, 19 October 1852.

<sup>4</sup> AP, 7 January 1853.

<sup>5</sup> SDG, 21 February 1850.

<sup>6</sup> AP, 29 January 1857.

in the penitentiary for stealing slaves.<sup>1</sup> In 1853 Enoch Reed was tried and found guilty of aiding a fugitive slave in Albany, Georgia.<sup>2</sup> Free blacks convicted of "inveigling" and "enticing" slaves away from their owners were sentenced to one year hard labor in the penitentiary. At the end of the sentence they were to be sold into bondage for life.<sup>3</sup>

Runaway notices revealed that slaves escaped singly, in pairs, in gangs, or with family members. An advertisement for July 7, 1851 stated that Oscar and Peter, both belonging to P. M. Nightengale, absconded together.<sup>4</sup> Will and Bill ran away from Hollingsworth's plantation in Irwin County, Georgia.<sup>5</sup> A "gang" of runaway slaves stole a canoe boat from the plantation of James Thomas.<sup>6</sup> Oren Davis of Wilkinson County advertised for the return of his seven slaves who escaped at the same time.<sup>7</sup> Two other slaves, Bill and his wife, Martha, were captured in Tennessee.<sup>8</sup> Another slave, Beck, managed to escape with her infant child and an eight year old girl.<sup>9</sup>

The length and location of escape are also important factors in discussing fugitive slaves. According to "brought to jail" notices fugitive

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<sup>1</sup>MFU, 23 March 1851.

<sup>2</sup>AP, 18 February 1853.

<sup>3</sup>Lucius Q. C. Lamar, comp., A Compilation of The Laws of the State of Georgia, 1800-1810 (Augusta, 1813), p. 804.

<sup>4</sup>AP, 3 October 1851.

<sup>5</sup>SDG, 21 September 1850.

<sup>6</sup>SDG, 7 July 1851.

<sup>7</sup>AP, 12 August 1858.

<sup>8</sup>MFU, 19 January 1858.

<sup>9</sup>SDG, 4 February 1853.

slaves stayed at large anywhere from one day, a week, a month to several years. For instance, a male fugitive, Benjamin was at large for eight years, during which time he passed as a free black.<sup>1</sup> An advertisement for April 27, 1852 advertised for the return of a male slave, who disappeared in January of 1851.<sup>2</sup> Another slave, Jim, was at large six weeks before he was apprehended.<sup>3</sup>

Wade's assertion that the city was a refuge for runaways seems to be true in the case of Georgia.<sup>4</sup> Certain Georgia municipalities experienced an influx of fugitive slaves from other areas within the state as well as from other states. This can be attributed to Georgia's central location among such slaveholding states as Tennessee, Florida, Alabama, North and South Carolina. Twenty of the notices examined in the Columbus paper referred to slaves who had absconded into Columbus and surrounding areas from Alabama.<sup>5</sup> An advertisement for June 3, 1851, requested the return of a slave belonging to John Reynolds of Macon County, Alabama.<sup>6</sup> William A. Campbell of Dover, Alabama believed that his two slaves, Peter and Jonas, were "lurking around" Jasper County, Georgia.<sup>7</sup> Another slave, Floyd, the property of John Henry of Barbour County, Alabama, was believed

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<sup>1</sup>CE, 9 August 1853.

<sup>2</sup>SDG, 1 April 1850.

<sup>3</sup>CE, 10 June 1854.

<sup>4</sup>Richard C. Wade, Slavery in the Cities (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 214.

<sup>5</sup>CE. (This number was obtained by counting all of the runaway notices found in this newspaper.)

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 23 October 1857.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 17 September 1850.

to be in Harris County, Georgia.<sup>1</sup> Savannah also appeared to be a haven for runaway slaves. One Bill, who escaped from North Carolina, was captured in Savannah.<sup>2</sup> Another slave, the property of David Gillet of Alachua County, Florida was also captured in Savannah.<sup>3</sup>

Several slaves ran away from North and South Carolina into parts of Georgia. Three male slaves from Gramhamville and Charleston, South Carolina were apprehended and taken to the Bryan County jail.<sup>4</sup> The slave of C. W. Broughton of Gramhamville, South Carolina was captured in Georgia.<sup>5</sup> A "brought to jail" notice listed a mulatto man as the property of John Millen of Florida.<sup>6</sup>

It becomes evident from examining the numerous runaway notices utilized in this analysis that fugitive slaves did create a problem for slaveholders. Runaway notices were submitted to the selected newspapers by the jailors of different counties as well as by the owners of the slaves. The advertisements indicate that slaves absconded for various reasons. The forging of free papers, passing for white, and the aid of whites and free blacks were means of escape. Slaves managed to stay at large for days, months or years. Moreover, several slaves absconded into Georgia from other states.

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<sup>1</sup>CE, 20 October 1857.

<sup>2</sup>SDG, 5 July 1850.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 3 January 1855.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 22 August 1851.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 12 April 1850.

<sup>6</sup>AP, 4 April 1851.

## CHAPTER II

### SLAVE HIRING

Another facet of the institution of slavery was the practice of slave hiring which was another means of meeting the demands of the labor market. Frederic Bancroft asserted that the practice of slave hiring existed throughout the South, and was not related to the conditions of bondage, but the work which could be obtained from a slave for a certain period of time at a given price.<sup>1</sup> Slave hiring presented advantages for the three persons involved. It enabled the slaveholder to benefit financially from the services his slave rendered to others. Slave hiring provided the hirer with the same status enjoyed by the slaveholding elite. It also eliminated the usual burdens that one experienced in owning slaves. In addition, this practice sometimes allowed slaves to hire their own time.<sup>2</sup>

In examining numerous advertisements for slave hiring several pertinent facts were revealed. As in runaway notices, slave hiring may be classified into two groups; the "wanted to hire," and the "for hire" advertisements. The "wanted to hire" notices were published by those

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<sup>1</sup>Frederic Bancroft, Slave Trading in the Old South (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1959), p. 145.

<sup>2</sup>Flanders, Plantation Slavery in Georgia, p. 207.

individuals wishing to employ the services of a slave for limited periods of time. They usually consisted of the number of slaves needed, the nature of the job, type of slave preferred, and sometimes the amount of wages involved. Illustrative of this was an advertisement submitted by J. F. Gilmer of Savannah, who wanted to hire "eight colored laborers, who would be employed in driving piles across the upper end of Fig Island Channel." Liberal wages were promised.<sup>1</sup> The Pulaski House of Savannah desired to hire "four or five colored men and women accustomed to house work."<sup>2</sup> A notice for August 14, 1856 revealed that a prospective employer wanted to hire for the balance of the year a "negro woman with a child three to six months old."<sup>3</sup> It seems reasonable to conclude that this female was wanted as a wet nurse. Another advertisement submitted by Samuel Irwin, a farmer by trade,<sup>4</sup> indicated that he wanted to employ the services of a good boat maker and two or three shoemakers,<sup>5</sup> while Asa Bates wanted to hire twenty Negroes for three months or the balance of the year.<sup>6</sup>

The second type of advertisement pertaining to slave hiring were the "for hire" notices. These were submitted either by owners or persons engaged in the enterprise of slave hiring and were usually more descriptive. One such notice referred to a Negro girl, who was "suitable for

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<sup>1</sup>SG, 23 May 1853.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 2 October 1851.

<sup>3</sup>AP, 14 August 1856.

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Census, MS., Schedule I, "Enumeration of Free Inhabitants" for Lee County, 1850.

<sup>5</sup>AP, 14 February 1851.

<sup>6</sup>CE, 16 May 1854.



a field hand."<sup>1</sup> One C. P. Rogers advertised to hire a fifteen years old servant girl, who was accustomed to house work and described as a good nurse.<sup>2</sup> Another advertisement listed for hire a "smart intelligent colored boy between nine and ten years old," who was acquainted with parlour work and was a smart waiter.<sup>3</sup> The Philbrick & Bell company advertised a good house boy of fourteen years, for hire until September 1, 1855.<sup>4</sup>

The reasons for slave hiring varied. Some slaves were hired out for the benefit of the heirs of an estate. For instance, all the Negroes belonging to the estate of William Jinks, deceased, of Floyd County were advertised for hire.<sup>5</sup> An advertisement for January 16, 1852 offered for hire "the negroes belonging to Daniel Woolbright, deceased, for the balance of the year."<sup>6</sup>

In this connection, it is of interest to note that the failure to pay taxes at times resulted in free blacks being hired out. Forty-eight free blacks were advertised for hire at a Tax Collector's sale held in Savannah for failure to pay their state and county taxes.<sup>7</sup> The following advertisement offered

about sixty free negroes for hire for payments of their taxes. Each person owes \$6.25. . . .The conditions of hiring will be whoever will take them for the shortest period of time.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>RC, 4 March 1851.

<sup>2</sup>CE, 25 May 1852

<sup>3</sup>SDG, 9 December 1851.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 7 February 1855.

<sup>5</sup>RC, 19 December 1850.

<sup>6</sup>AP, 16 January 1852.

<sup>7</sup>SDG, 12 February 1854.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 5 February 1851.

That in some cases color was an important factor in slave hiring can be seen in the fact that some advertisements specified the color of the wanted for a particular job. It should be noted that these advertisements generally specified color when hiring out slaves for domestic jobs, and usually requested mulattoes. For example, J. M. Haywood in advertising for hire a good washer and ironer by the month or year, specified a mulatto woman.<sup>1</sup> T. W. Talman offered a yellow girl of eighteen years for hire as house servant.<sup>2</sup>

As was indicated earlier, the practice of slave hiring could bring financial advantages to an owner, especially one who had a surplus of slaves. As Professor Richard Wade has observed, "the development of the hiring-out system, moreover, greatly broadened the opportunity for the use of slaves."<sup>3</sup> Under this system male and female slaves worked in various occupations. The work that females were hired out to do often differed from that of the males. Women were usually hired out as cooks, washers, ironers, and wet nurses. H. J. Chambers, a very prominent broker in Savannah, advertised the hiring out of a "negro woman" about thirty-two years old, with good character, as a good cook, washer, and ironer, along with three other women, whom he described as plain cooks, washers, and ironers.<sup>4</sup> One J. H. Nisbet of Milledgeville wanted to hire a "negro girl" twelve or fourteen years old as a nurse.<sup>5</sup> Another advertisement offered the services of two women, one

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 16 February 1852.

<sup>2</sup>CE, 18 March 1856.

<sup>3</sup>Wade, Slavery in The Cities, p. 38.

<sup>4</sup>SDG, 24 January 1850.

<sup>5</sup>MFU, 7 September 1858.

as a seamstress and the other as a washer and ironer.<sup>1</sup> Occasionally females were employed in more strenuous occupations. For example, a prospective employer advertised on April 16, 1857, for several Negroes, consisting of men, women, boys, and girls to cut and haul bricks.<sup>2</sup>

The construction and improvement of Georgia's transportation system necessitated the employment of a large number of bondsmen. To illustrate, one hundred and fifty Negroes were wanted to work on the West Point Railroad for the year 1850. Each bondsman was to be paid one hundred and fifty dollars per year. The advertisement also specified that the owners of hirelings must provide clothing and pay medical expenses.<sup>3</sup> In that same year, two men who were apparently brokers operating in the city of Albany, advertised for

Negro men to work on the Brunswick Railroad for thirteen dollars per month. Clothing, medical attention and food provided. They will receive five pounds of lean bacon, a quart of molasses per week, fresh bread, and in sickly season one pint of coffee each morning....No abuse or ill treatment allowed. Payments made monthly in cash.<sup>4</sup>

Five years later one hundred "able bodied negro men," were sought by the owners of the M & G Railroad for employment in grading and working on trains between Girard and Union Springs.<sup>5</sup> At the local level, James M. Mercer, Mayor Pro Tem of Albany, wanted to employ two "negro boys" to work on the streets.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>CE, 27 December 1853.

<sup>2</sup>AP, 16 April 1857.

<sup>3</sup>CE, 29 January 1850.

<sup>4</sup>AP, 31 October 1852.

<sup>5</sup>CE, 16 January 1855.

<sup>6</sup>AP, 27 January 1854.

Newspaper advertisements show that slaves were hired to work aboard ships. One such notice submitted by Brigham and Kelley Company expressed a desire to hire ten or twelve Negro boat hands.<sup>1</sup> Samuel M. Pond, President of the Steamboat Company of Georgia, wished to hire Negroes as steamboat and wharf hands, by the month or six months.<sup>2</sup> "Twenty able bodied negroes" to work as boat hands, either by the day, month or year, were wanted by still another company. This notice assured owners that the lives of hirelings would be insured while employed on the river.<sup>3</sup>

Negro artisans were employed in such occupations as blacksmiths, brick masons, carriage drivers, and shoemakers. Prospective employers who desired to hire workers for an entire year would, at times advertise in December of the current year. Such was true of J. M. Cooper whose advertisement appeared in December, 1858. He expressed his intention to hire six carpenters for the year 1859.<sup>4</sup> One James Meldon of Albany, desired to employ an active and intelligent negro boy to learn the carriage making trade.<sup>5</sup> Kimbrough and Company wanted to hire immediately, three good shoemakers.<sup>6</sup> Another advertisement submitted by Jones & Brothers indicated that the firm wanted to employ a blacksmith by the month or year.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>SDG, 16 December 1850.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 1 October 1850.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 18 May 1853.

<sup>4</sup>AP, 9 December 1858.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 1 July 1853.

<sup>6</sup>CE, 12 February 1850.

<sup>7</sup>SDG, 24 January 1854.

Between the years 1850 to 1860 there was a demand for the services of 650 slaves with only 123 advertised as being for hire.<sup>1</sup> As might be expected the greatest demands for hirelings came from Columbus, Savannah, and surrounding areas. This may be attributed to the growing opportunities afforded in the city. A study of all notices shows that hirelings were most likely to find work in domestic positions, for the demand for such workers was greatest.

The period of time a slave was hired out varied. "In most cases the period began just before New Year and ended just before Christmas."<sup>2</sup> However, Charles Van Horn wanted to hire seven "prime negroes" for no less than three months.<sup>3</sup> John D. Gray & Company wanted to hire one hundred and fifty Negroes for the entire year of 1850.<sup>4</sup> A notice for May 26, 1859, wanted to hire out two carpenters for the remainder of the year.<sup>5</sup>

As the practice of slave hiring increased and due to the abuse that hirelings received, owners felt the need to insure their property. This resulted in several insurance companies advertising insurance policies for slaves. One such notice, submitted by the Farmer's Insurance Company of Utica, New York offered "insurance on Negroes on 2/3 cash valuation."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>AP, CE, MFU, RC, SDG. (This figure was obtained by counting all of the advertisements pertaining to slave hiring.)

<sup>2</sup>Bancroft, Slave Trading in The Old South, p. 147.

<sup>3</sup>SDG, 1 April 1850.

<sup>4</sup>CE, 29 January 1850.

<sup>5</sup>AP, 26 May 1859.

<sup>6</sup>MFU, 18 April 1854.

The Southern Mutual Insurance Company of Georgia also insured "risk on negro property on the most liberal terms."<sup>1</sup>

Several advertisements and editorials contain evidence that there existed a certain degree of opposition to the practice of slave hiring. Even in the practice of slave hiring the etiquette of antebellum race relations was observed. For example, one advertisement expressing the desire to employ two hundred Negroes to work on the Muscogee Railroad emphasized that "Negroes will work in companies separate and at a distance from any white laborers who may be employed on the same line of work."<sup>2</sup> An editorial for June 29, 1858 criticized the policy of teaching mechanical trades to Negroes. The writer contended that:

The policy of teaching negroes the various trades tends to make the rich richer and the poor poorer, or by bringing them into competition with white labor, and thus arraying capital against labor (negro is the capital). It tends to elevate the negro at the expense of the poor white man: and makes the poor mechanics of the South the enemy of the negro and the institution of slavery.<sup>3</sup>

Another editorial referred to a Georgia Supreme Court decision, which held that the hirer was not to be compensated for his loss, if a hireling died before the expiration of his contract. It asserted that:

This is a decision which is signally oppressive to the poorer class of our citizens--The large majority--who are compelled to hire servants. The whole burden of the risk and loss is made to fall, not on the owner of the property (which ought to ensure) but on the poor man who hires. . . .<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>AP, 30 January 1852.

<sup>2</sup>MFU, 29 June 1858.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 12 December 1854.

Significant for this study are the laws which governed slave hiring. Acting on instructions from the City Council of Savannah, Edward G. Wilson, Clerk of Council, published a notice in the Georgian that all slaveholders were required to obtain a badge for their hirelings. These badges were granted for one year, "commencing on the first of January in each year."<sup>1</sup> In addition, persons found guilty of violating this ordinance were subject to a fine "not exceeding fifty dollars," and the hireling could be confined in jail until the fine was paid.<sup>2</sup> The prices of badges varied, depending upon the type of work a slave engaged in. For example, slaves exercising the trade of cabinet maker, house or ship carpenter, bricklayer, blacksmith, barber or tailor for hire, were required to pay a fee of \$10.56 $\frac{1}{4}$  annually.<sup>3</sup> Mechanics or handicraft tradesmen for hire were charged \$8.56 $\frac{1}{4}$ , while slaves engaging in domestic labor paid a fee of \$4.56 $\frac{1}{4}$ .<sup>4</sup> The state of Georgia also required that owners or hirers of slaves permitted to hire their own time to pay a tax of one hundred dollars per slave.<sup>5</sup>

For all the reasons discussed above, slaves were hired out, the length of time of such hire determined by either the nature of work required or the needs of specific employers. That the practice was advan-

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<sup>1</sup>SG, 7 January 1855.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 13 January 1855.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Oliver H. Prince, ed., A Digest of the Laws of the State of Georgia (Athens, 1837), 788.

tageous is attested to by the appearance of numerous advertisements or notices which are to be found in the newspapers used in this study. That it was of economic benefit to both employers and owners of slaves can be determined by the nature of advertisement. Both owners and prospective employers expressed their need for slave employees, or indicated a desire to hire out their bondsmen. Men as well as women were hired out, the sex generally being determined by the type of work available. Jobs ran the gamut from those requiring skill to those which were laborious, requiring little if any skill. The practice of slave hiring was regulated by both state law and city ordinances. Official reaction to the practice reflect the caution with which the practice was regarded as well as opposition from white artisans and workers who were fearful of competition on the job market.



## CHAPTER III

### SLAVE SELLING

Between 1850 and 1860 over 800 slaves were listed for sale in newspapers examined for this study.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to examine the institution of slavery in Georgia adequately without giving attention to the buying and selling of slaves. Publishing of advertisements in local newspapers was frequently done by owners who desired to dispose of their human chattels. The historian of slavery in Georgia notes that "slaves were chattels as well as persons and as such were sold freely, privately or publicly, for cash or credit."<sup>2</sup> Certain advantages accrued to masters, among them being the following: it enabled the owner to rid himself of troublesome property; when the market price for slaves was high, the master could improve his or her financial status; while the selling of slave property at times served as a means of settling an owner's debts.

Aside from the above advantages, slaves were sold throughout the state, as well as in other parts of the South, for a number of reasons. Some slaves were sold as part of an estate for the purpose of dividing the property among the heirs. This type of sale was advertised under the

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<sup>1</sup>AP, CE, MFU, SDG, RC. (This figure was obtained by counting all the advertisements pertaining to slave selling.)

<sup>2</sup>Flanders, Plantation Slavery in Georgia, p. 187.

following headings: "Administrator's Sale" "Guardian's Sale" or "Executor's Sale." Five hundred and fifty of the total number of slaves for sale may be classified in the above group.<sup>1</sup> Mary Rigden, the guardian of Ann Rigden, a minor, advertised the sale of a Negro girl for the benefit of said minor.<sup>2</sup> One C. P. Huckaby, legal guardian of Sarah and Martin Huckaby, offered the sale of a Negro woman, and her ten month old infant.<sup>3</sup> An advertisement found in the Courier made reference to a Negro male, Perry, who was to be sold for the benefit of R. A. Story, a lunatic of Chattooga County.<sup>4</sup> Noteworthy is the fact that prior to the publishing of a for sale advertisement, the guardian or administrator usually submitted several months in advance to the local newspaper a notice requesting permission from the Inferior Court of said county to sell a certain slave. However, these notices sometimes contained only a statement saying when these sales were to take place. Three slaves belonging to the estate of Reuben Noll, deceased, of Appling County were offered for sale by his executors.<sup>5</sup> E. Atkins and James Holzendorff offered for sale forty-five to fifty-five Negroes belonging to the estate of Thomas Miller, deceased.<sup>6</sup> In this connection it is interesting to note that several slaves belonging to free persons of color, John Leod and Henry Myers, were offered for sale

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<sup>1</sup>SDG, 30 March 1852.

<sup>2</sup>MFU, 21 November 1854.

<sup>3</sup>CE, 18 April 1854.

<sup>4</sup>AP, 10 November 1859.

<sup>5</sup>RC, 9 April 1852.

<sup>6</sup>SDG, 9 February 1850.

for the benefit of said free persons of color.<sup>1</sup>

Slaves sold as part of an estate were sometimes sold in large numbers. For instance, the administrator for the estate of Cheadle Cochran, deceased, listed for sale forty Negroes between the ages of one month and fifty years.<sup>2</sup> This notice suggests that age was not always an important factor in selling slaves. In the same year, Robert Tombs, administrator for the estate of Henry J. Pope, offered for sale ninety to one hundred Negroes.<sup>3</sup> In 1859, near the end of the antebellum period, one hundred and fifty Negroes belonging to the estate of Paul Tarver of Albany, deceased, were advertised for sale in the Patriot.<sup>4</sup>

Failure to pay taxes or other debts usually resulted in the sale of one's chattel. This type of sale was referred to as a "Mortgage Sale" or "Sheriff's Sale." These sales were to take place the first Tuesday in each month. An advertisement submitted by the Sheriff of Chatham County for the month of February, ordered a male slave, July, the property of Hamilton Fripp to be sold in order to satisfy his city taxes for the year 1849.<sup>5</sup> A McIntosh County "Sheriff's Sale" listed for the sale a mulatto girl, Betsy of fifteen years, who was "levied on as the property of Moses Young to satisfy a fi fa issued out of the Superior Court of said county,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> MFU, 21 November 1854.

<sup>3</sup> CE, 18 April 1854.

<sup>4</sup> AP, 10 November 1859.

<sup>5</sup> SDG, 9 February 1850.

in favor of Harris & Dunham vs Moses Young."<sup>1</sup> In the same year, a Negro girl, Alpha, was listed for sale for failure of her owner to pay his state and county taxes for the previous year.<sup>2</sup> Another "Sheriff's Sale: for the month of August offered for sale two Negroes to satisfy the taxes of Mrs. Isabella Pettis for the years 1846 to 1850."<sup>3</sup> Two slaves belonging to John Hatcher were listed in a Floyd County "Sheriff's Sale" for the month of April.<sup>4</sup> The fact that slaves were sometimes considered a substitute for money, seemingly made it easy for the owner to sell slaves in order to pay his debts. Furthermore, a runaway slave, Bill, who had been advertised as a fugitive for over a year was ordered to be sold by the Inferior Court of McIntosh County, due to the owner's failure to come forward and pay fees and other expenses for the upkeep of said slave.<sup>5</sup>

"Mortgage Sales" along with "Sheriff's Sales" sometimes involved a suit between two or three persons. For instance, four slaves belonging to Williamson Bailey of Jasper County were sold to satisfy a suit in favor of Jonas H. Holland.<sup>6</sup> One J. T. Hudson's slave was sold to pay his debt in a suit against J. Holder and received the money from the sale of Holder's slave, Kathy.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>SG, 14 March 1855.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 1 February 1855.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 16 August 1850.

<sup>4</sup>RC, 3 April 1851.

<sup>5</sup>SDG, 8 August 1852.

<sup>6</sup>MFU, 25 March 1851.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 10 April 1858.

Several "For Sale" advertisements pertained to free persons of color, who had failed to pay their state and county taxes. A "Tax Collector's Sale" advertised seventy-three free blacks for sale in order to satisfy their state and county taxes for the year 1851.<sup>1</sup> The state of Georgia required all free persons of color between the ages of eighteen and fifty to be taxed the sum of five dollars annually.<sup>2</sup> In addition, another law provided that:

In all cases where free persons of color shall fail or refuse to pay the taxes charged against them, and shall have no property on which to levy, the collector may levy or hire out said persons of color, for such price as will produce the amount due the state.<sup>3</sup>

Another notice listed George Robinson, "a nominal slave," for sale for failure to pay his taxes for the year 1850.<sup>4</sup> One Demaris Rose, a free person of color of Emanuel, was offered for sale in order to satisfy her taxes for the year 1855.<sup>5</sup>

An advertisement published by H. J. Chalmers, a prominent broker for February 2, 1850 is illustrative of the fact that several brokers engaged in slave selling. The notice stated that:

As the price of negroes has rapidly advanced for the last three months, all persons who may have negroes they may wish to dispose of are informed that by applying to the subscriber he will at all times dispose of them for the highest cash price that can be had for them in Savannah.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>SDG, 14 January 1852.

<sup>2</sup>T.R.R. Cobb, Digest of the Statute Laws of Georgia (Athens, 1851), p. 1080.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 1062.

<sup>4</sup>AP, 10 January 1851.

<sup>5</sup>MFU, 1 July 1856.

<sup>6</sup>SDG, 2 February 1850.

Advertisements published by brokers differed from the typical "For Sale" notices, inasmuch as they usually described the type of slave for sale, gave good qualities, and the trade or occupation of the slave. These advertisements along with those published by slaveholders usually included a statement "sold for no fault." One such notice published by H. J. Chalmers featured a Negro girl eighteen years old brought up as a house servant, of good character and "sold for no fault."<sup>1</sup> The fact that no advertisements were published in the Georgian by Chalmers after 1853 suggests that he may have changed professions. Another advertisement submitted by C. S. Harrison & Company of Columbus, offered for sale thirty slaves, who were described as railroad hands.<sup>2</sup> The G. W. Hines & Company advertised the sale of one hundred and fifty-nine "prime negroes" accustomed to the cultivation of cotton and corn. The notice specified that they were to be sold in families,<sup>3</sup> which suggests that some owners tried to keep their slave families together. A notice published in the Georgian for 1853 by T. J. Walsh featured five Negroes for sale.<sup>4</sup> Three years later Walsh advertised the sale of a family of Negroes, consisting of a woman twenty-seven years old and three children.<sup>5</sup> Walsh's business seems to have prospered at the time Chalmer's declined. Another notice referred

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<sup>1</sup>SDG, 30 July 1850.

<sup>2</sup>CE, 24 December 1857.

<sup>3</sup>AP, 27 December 1850.

<sup>4</sup>SDG, 25 January 1853.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 3 October 1855.

to a Negro boy fifteen years old, who was handy with tools and had the potentials of becoming a good carpenter.<sup>1</sup>

Some owners specified the reasons involved in selling a particular slave. Indicative of this is an advertisement submitted by Thomas Scrutchin of Lee County, who, desiring to change his business, advertised the sale of his plantation and fifty slaves.<sup>2</sup> One A. Iverson listed six or eight young Negroes to be sold at a public auction. Additional information stated that the slaves were "sold for no fault" but to buy women in their place.<sup>3</sup> An owner who resided in the country did not wish to separate his female slave and child from her husband who lived in the city, advertised to sell her in the city,<sup>4</sup> while Samuel Wright stated that he wished to sell his mulatto woman because he needed the money.<sup>5</sup> Another slaveholder wanted to sell a Negro woman and her son, both possessing good character due to his having fewer duties.<sup>6</sup>

Also found in the "For Sale" advertisements were notices published by persons desiring to purchase a slave. For example, A. J. Ross of Milledgeville wanted to purchase "two likely negro boys nineteen or twenty years old."<sup>7</sup> Another notice for the same year revealed that a prospective purchaser wanted to buy a Negro girl, fifteen or twenty years old.<sup>8</sup> An

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<sup>1</sup>AP, 9 December 1857.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 3 September 1857.

<sup>3</sup>CE, 13 December 1853.

<sup>4</sup>SDG, 15 February 1852.

<sup>5</sup>AP, 18 April 1851.

<sup>6</sup>SDG, 1 June 1850.

<sup>7</sup>MFU, 1 July 1856.

<sup>8</sup>AP, 24 January 1854.

advertisement published in the Federal Union by Hawkins & Mitchell offered to pay cash for fifteen or twenty Negro men.<sup>1</sup>

Slaves were sold singly, in pairs, and gangs, while at times entire families were sold. On March 4, 1851 a family of five, consisting of a father, mother, and three children were advertised for sale.<sup>2</sup> Richard G. Atkins published a notice for the sale of two slaves,<sup>3</sup> while T. J. Walsh published a notice for the sale of a "gang of twenty negroes accustomed to the culture of cotton."<sup>4</sup>

The "For Sale" advertisements like the "For Hire" notices only made reference to color when domestic work was involved. As might be expected mulattoes were usually sold as domestic servants. A mulatto woman, described as a first rate washer, ironer, and cook was listed for sale.<sup>5</sup> In the same year, a mulatto boy accustomed to house work was advertised for sale.<sup>6</sup>

For all the reasons surveyed above, slaves were sold. It is evident from the numerous notices examined in this study that the practice of slave selling was a profitable enterprise. Not only did the owner benefit from the sale of a slave, but also the buyer, and at times a third party.

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<sup>1</sup>MFU, 26 October 1858.

<sup>2</sup>SDG, 14 March 1851.

<sup>3</sup>MFU, 9 September 1856.

<sup>4</sup>SDG, 4 January 1851.

<sup>5</sup>AP, 18 April 1851.

<sup>6</sup>SDG, 13 November 1851.



Several notices pertained to persons wishing to purchase a slave or slaves. This practice also enabled the state to collect revenue from those individuals who failed to pay their taxes. As was true in the legal exchange of other property, slave selling was governed by both local and state laws.

## CHAPTER IV

### ECONOMICS OF SLAVERY

A study of slavery in Georgia is incomplete without an analysis of the economic aspects of slavery. As mentioned earlier the economics of slavery tends to be a very controversial subject. Both Northerners and Southerners found themselves in constant disagreement over this aspect of slavery. The North took advantage of every opportunity afforded them to criticize the South's economic system. In turn, the South took advantage of every opportunity available to uphold and defend their way of life.

Several editorials which appeared in the various newspapers during the years 1850-1860 defended the economics of slavery. For example, the following which appeared in the Georgian for 1851 upheld and extolled the South's labor system:

In every country in the world there is a large class of people who live by daily labor, that is upon wages. In the North they are hirelings and receive their wages in money. In the South they are slaves, and receive their wages in maintenance and lucrative privileges. No laborers in the world receive larger wages than the slaves of the South. They are well fed and plainly clothed.<sup>1</sup>

Another item commenting on the "blessings of African Slavery" claimed that:

the production of the slave trade has increased the wealth and independence of the nation, given employment to 1,000's

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<sup>1</sup>SDG, 18 April 1851.

at home and abroad....Slavery has enabled the white man to cultivate his mind that otherwise would have been devoted to menial work....<sup>1</sup>

Cotton was indeed king in the South, for the region's economy was centered around the growth of cotton. The cultivation of cotton was made possible through the massive use of slave labor. Many Southerners believed that without the production of cotton, which they felt to be almost impossible with the use of free labor, the clothing industries in the North as well as in England would collapse. An editorial which appeared on February 26, 1850, expressed a similar opinion, asserting that "England needs American cotton, which grows in the South." The editorial emphasized that without cotton the means of living for a million of her people would be cut off.<sup>2</sup>

In return for their services, slaves were compensated with a limited amount of food, clothing, and shelter. The plantation owner usually provided his slaves with food and shelter from his own plantation, while the demand for clothing was usually met by an outside source. To meet these demands local merchants engaged in the sale of what was generally referred to as "negro clothing" and other supplies. One such merchant was H. Hora of Albany, who frequently advertised the sale of "negro shoes" and blankets in the Patriot.<sup>3</sup> The Teanor & Tinsley Company listed for sale plantation goods, which consisted of 1200 "negro blankets," 100 pieces of kersey, 50

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<sup>1</sup>AP, 26 April 1850.

<sup>2</sup>MFU, 26 February 1850.

<sup>3</sup>AP, 27 September 1850.

pieces of linsey and wool hats,<sup>1</sup> while Goodson & Company of Rome sold "negro shoes."<sup>2</sup> An advertisement found in the Federal Union listed for sale "negro shoes" manufactured by the Georgia Penitentiary for "1.35 ct per pair."<sup>3</sup> A merchant advertising the sale of "negro brogans," encouraged planters to support the Southern economy by purchasing brogans from him instead of from Northern dealers.<sup>4</sup> In the same year, Charles A. Peabody offered a silver medal at a fair sponsored by the Muscogee and Russel Agricultural Society, for the best six pairs of "negro shoes" made in Alabama or Georgia.<sup>5</sup>

Of practical concern to slaveholders was the physical condition of their human property. The historian, James C. Bonner noted that in Georgia "the health and general welfare of slaves took on added importance during the 1850's."<sup>6</sup> Several notices and advertisements which appeared in the papers support this statement. An examination of numerous advertisements suggests that many owners invested in various medicines which cured the illnesses of their slaves, or claims were made indicating that they had. An unhealthy slave was of no benefit to a plantation owner. One William A. Jarrett of Milledge wrote a letter to a Dr. J. Gibson, which was published in the local newspaper, stating that he used his

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<sup>1</sup>MFU, 14 November 1854.

<sup>2</sup>RC, 8 July 1852.

<sup>3</sup>MFU, 28 September 1858.

<sup>4</sup>SDG, 1 January 1850.

<sup>5</sup>CE, 21 March 1852.

<sup>6</sup>James C. Bonner, A History of Georgia Agriculture, 1732-1860 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1964), p. 197.

"Linch's Anti Rheumatic Powers" on his "negro boy." According to the owner his slave had been unable to work in the field due to illness, but Dr. Gibson's medication enabled him to return to the plow.<sup>1</sup> John D. Girtman used "Dr. Little's Vermitage" on his three year old slave, who was suffering from worms.<sup>2</sup> It appears as if the manufacturers of these remedies had a very profitable business. Another notice which was submitted to the Courier allegedly by the owner, praised "Dr. Jones's Remedies," which he is supposed to have used on his Negro girl.<sup>3</sup> Whether or not these medicines were as beneficial as claimed is conjecture. The importance of these advertisements lies in the fact that certain kinds of patent medication or cures were available and apparently designed for the slave market.

Several physicians opened up hospitals in Georgia during the 1850's to treat Negroes. Two such physicians, W. G. Bulloch and Juriah Harris operated a surgical infirmary for the treatment of "negro surgical and chronic diseases."<sup>4</sup> Two other physicians, S. Harris and J. J. Loberster of Savannah published the following notice:

The undersigned have now in preparation, and will immediately open at a convenient point an infirmary for medical and surgical treatment of negroes....<sup>5</sup>

One Dr. Craig of Columbus, who specialized in chronic diseases, informed

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<sup>1</sup>MFU, 18 March 1856.

<sup>2</sup>CE, 11 June 1850.

<sup>3</sup>RC, 6 March 1851.

<sup>4</sup>AP, 17 September 1857.

<sup>5</sup>SDG, 13 July 1850.

the public that he was prepared to accommodate Negroes from surrounding areas placed under his care.<sup>1</sup>

As mentioned earlier, many owners sought to insure the lives of their slaves. This may be attributed to the fact that slaves represented a source of labor as well as capital and that owners desired to be compensated for loss or damage to their property. William F. Smith of Albany, an agent for the Lombard Insurance Company of Philadelphia offered insurance coverage on slaves.<sup>2</sup> Other companies such as Southern Mutual<sup>3</sup> and Farmer's of New York<sup>4</sup> also attempted to meet the needs of the slaveholders.

An examination of numerous editorial and advertisement affirms that Southerners attempted to defend their economic system. The institution of slavery relied upon the principle of supply and demand. While themselves not owners of slaves, certain entrepreneurs profited from the system. They met the needs of the system through the selling of types of coarse clothing and other related supplies, which they furnished to the holders of slaves for a price. The fact that illness prevented a slave from rendering service to his master necessitated the opening of a number of hospitals throughout Georgia for the treatment of "Negro" illnesses. In addition various individuals advertised the sale of remedies which were guaranteed to improve the health of a slave, while various insurance companies indirectly encouraged the practice of slavery by offering coverage on Negro property.

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<sup>1</sup>CE, 5 October 1852.

<sup>2</sup>AP, 16 April 1857.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 30 January 1852.

<sup>4</sup>MFU, 18 April 1854.

## CONCLUSION

A number of significant generalizations can be drawn from the material presented here. The years 1850-1860 were important ones in the development of the peculiar institution in the state of Georgia. This fact is made eminently clear from an examination of numerous newspaper accounts, advertisements, and notices.

That runaway slaves presented the slaveholder with many problems is attested to by the numerous runaway notices found in this study. The slaveholder as well as the jailors of different counties were affected by fugitive slaves. The reasons and methods of escape varied throughout the state.

It is evident from an analysis of numerous advertisements that the practice of slave hiring was advantageous. Owners and employers of hirelings benefitted financially from this practice. Slaves in Georgia were hired out in various jobs and occupations depending upon the sex of the slave. In addition, many white artisans and workers objected to the competition presented by Negro artisans. This practice was greatly affected by local and state laws.

During the years 1850-1860 hundreds of slaves were sold throughout the state. The reasons that necessitated these sales varied. Slave selling also presented slaveholders with many advantages. The state used this practice as one means of collecting revenue from individuals who failed to pay their taxes.

Additional evidence of the profitability of Georgia's peculiar institution can be adduced from the numerous editorials published defending this system. Several entrepreneurs profited from the system by selling various types of "negro goods." Manufacturers of patent medicines advertised the sale of their products for the improvement of a slave's health. Several hospitals served the Negro population in Georgia during the 1850's.



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